

against which the work of destruction was an eloquent if outrageous protest *It was a fearful enough shock to orthodox feeling, a sad blow to art, but it was a mere freak of passion compared with the burning of men and the burying of women alive for a difference of religious opinion.

It was, however, a mistake in tactics, for which the mob, not the Protestant preachers, was responsible. It threw, indeed, the regent into a momentary panic, and wrested from her the boon of provisional freedom of worship for the heretics in towns where Protestant congregations had been established. There was much rejoicing at the news, and the reformers looked upon their cause as won. The nobles, however, dissolved their confederation, and many of them drew back from a movement which threatened to land the country in anarchy. Even Orange, whilst sympathising with the demand for religious reform, felt it his duty to punish some of the rioters of Antwerp with exemplary severity, whilst Egmont hanged those of Flanders by the score. The concession to the heretics was, moreover, only the makeshift of necessity, and merely threw the confederates off their guard, whilst the duchess wrote letters to Philip informing him of her desperate position, and denouncing Orange, Egmont, Horn as rebels and abettors of the heretics. Philip went almost mad with rage when he heard the news. " By the soul of my father/' he swore, " it shall cost them dear." The iconoclasts were not rebels. They had no intention, in renouncing what they deemed idolatry, of rebelling against the king. To Philip, however, such sacrilege was worse than rebellion, and vengeance was now his watchword—vengeance on the rebel nobles who had dared to thwart his will, vengeance on the heretics who had raised their impious hands against God as well as His anointed. Vengeance had been his purpose all along, but that purpose was now stung into deadly activity. A Spanish army should be the instrument of his wrath, with Alva—the relentless Alva, who had long pressed for the heads of all who had opposed the royal will—to lead the crusade of extermination. Henceforth the duchess, who might still temporise on occasion, was merely a stopgap for Alva.

The coming of Alva, which this popular outburst hastened, marks the widening of the breach between the Spanish Philip